

Better food. Better farming. Better lives.

Sustain Strategy 2015 – 2020



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We're pleased to be introducing our guiding document for the next five years. This is the first time that Sustain has produced a strategic vision and its timing is telling.

With a new Government in place until 2020, this is the time to redouble our efforts in projecting a unified voice to policy makers and stakeholders at all levels, calling for a better food and farming system. Acting as the voice of our alliance members' concerns, Sustain has often proved that it is most valuable in influencing policy, through advocacy, campaigning, and working with others to show how what we're calling for can be done in practice.

This document shows how the varied voices of our members are all part of the same story, championing good health, nature and the environment, enterprise, food safety, skills and food culture. But we are not working in a vacuum, and much of what we call for is still not accepted by all, despite the evidence. What Sustain seeks to do is to remain nimble, and against the backdrop of what we are calling for, be quick to respond: not only to take opportunities to improve on what we have in place, but also to protect the best aspects of our food and farming which may be threatened.

This strategy does not mark a change of approach either on how we work or what we work on, but rather a reaffirmation of what, together, we do best. This serves as much to illustrate how we have worked in the past, and where we have been most effective. The challenge now is to make sure that our shared voice is louder, and that over the next five years, together, we will not only have convinced the country of the case for a better food and farming system, but that it has started to become a reality.



Mike Rayner
Chair of Sustain



Ben Reynolds
Deputy Coordinator



Kath Dalmeny
Coordinator

Our vision for a food and farming system is one where:

- **All food is produced in a way that is fair and sustainable.** Fair for farmers, workers, animals and which sustains the land, biodiversity and natural resources for now and generations to come.
- **A thriving food supply chain from ‘farm to fork’** delivers livelihoods for farmers here and abroad, and ensures manufacturers, suppliers, and caterers make healthy and sustainable options the easy choice for people, where no food is wasted.
- **Healthy, sustainable diets are accessible and affordable to all,** through a diverse array of outlets, and it becomes unacceptable and expensive to promote unhealthy, unethical and unsustainable produce.
- **We have a strong UK food culture that ensures food is valued and enjoyed,** and is promoted in coherent integrated government policy, and where skills in production and food quality are appreciated by all and not just the few.

Support better farming and food production

All food is produced in a way that is fair and sustainable. Fair for farmers, workers, animals and which sustains the land, biodiversity and natural resources for now and generations to come.

“The reports Sustain produce are valuable in our campaigning work to persuade politicians and policy makers of the value of ecological agriculture.”

The Landworkers’ Alliance



Covering 75% of the UK land mass, how and what we farm has a huge impact on the environment and wildlife, on the economy of rural communities and on our health. Past reports by Sustain have looked at how farm policy works, how it affects the UK and global markets and the impact on farmers and employment, our environment and health. But it is not just our land, the seas also need attention. Some scientists estimate that, at current rates

of decline, most of the world's fish stocks could collapse within our lifetimes. We need to act now to ensure that our marine environment is preserved for generations to come.

Despite years of campaigning by Sustain and many of its members bringing about some examples of good policy and practice, government action still often encourages the wrong kind of production systems and often

the wrong types of food. Health, biodiversity and economic indicators suggest we are not progressing towards a sustainable system of farming and fishing.

It is clear we need to be demanding a new farming and fishing system - coherent with healthy food policies, and a fair supply chain - which protects nature as well as farm and fishing jobs, ensures high animal welfare and which produces enough of what we need.



Over the next five years

Sustain aims to develop new work on the farmed environment and the communities that live and work in it. Some examples include:

- Stimulating better, healthier, biodiversity-boosting farming systems – such as organic – that also create and enhance jobs and livelihoods.
- Ensuring good farming, fishing and food jobs are understood and promoted as a core part of growing the green economy.
- Changing the way we spend agricultural subsidies - currently £3 billion - to better support decent jobs in farming and rural communities, a diversity of farm businesses, and to enhance and protect the natural environment.
- Ensuring protection of fish stocks and the marine environment.

What Sustain has achieved

- With the Organic Trade Board, Sustain has helped raise £5 million for the UK's first non-branded organic marketing campaign between 2010 - 2016, helping the organic market move back into growth for the first time since the recession.
- Helped form a new alliance to help protect precious antibiotics by reducing use in farming. It has gained support from major health agencies and medical experts.
- Between 1999-2002, our Organic Targets Campaign persuaded government to establish an Organic Action Plan aiming to substantially increase organic food production in the UK.

Increase sustainable food supply

A thriving food supply chain from 'farm to fork' delivers livelihoods for farmers here and abroad, and ensures manufacturers, suppliers, and caterers make healthy and sustainable options the easy choice for people, where no food is wasted.



What we eat is largely defined by those who supply our food. If we want to transform our food system, we need to encourage existing and new enterprises to put sustainability at the heart of their businesses. As an increasing proportion of food is eaten outside the home, catering and procurement offers one of the most effective ways to drive large scale changes in healthy and sustainable food. We can

make a huge difference by working with suppliers and caterers to ensure that more of the produce is healthier and meets higher ethical standards, supporting producer livelihoods and protecting the planet.

We all also have the ability to change what we eat directly, by 'voting with their purse'. But equally with £2 billion of taxpayers money spent on food in our

schools, hospitals, and other public settings, Government should lead by example in making sure that the food bought is healthy, and sustainable. Many of those supplying public sector catering also provide for the private sector, so it is possible to influence a much larger proportion of what we eat out.

Over the next five years

Sustain aims to consolidate our existing progress with work on catering and supply chains. Some examples include:

- Strengthening public sector standards for food, to ensure public money is invested in wider social, economic and environmental benefits, ensuring that all public sector settings, such as hospitals and

schools, are serving healthy, sustainable diets.

- Ensuring that these standards are effectively monitored and adhered to.
- Championing these or higher standards throughout other parts of food supply, including retailers and via Government policy ensuring that social,

economic and environmental good practice become commonplace, such as serving certified sustainable fish, organic and fairly traded food, eating less but better meat, waste minimisation and paying the living wage.

- Encouraging growth in small enterprises that build these standards into their business.

“For decades Sustain has patiently helped build a coherent vision of a better UK food and farming system. My goodness, how this is needed!”

Professor Tim Lang,
Centre for Food Policy,
City University and Sustain
chair, 1999 to 2005

What Sustain has achieved

- Caterers serving over 500 million meals per year are now serving sustainable fish, and 15 cities are running Sustainable Fish Cities campaign.
- In August 2014, our Campaign for Better Hospital Food secured the introduction of the first ever legally-binding nutritional and sustainability standards for patient meals in England.
- Our Save our School Food Standards campaign helped secure mandatory food and nutrition standards for all maintained schools and all new academies.
- The efforts of Sustain and several of our members meant that 100% Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar and bananas; 100% free-range eggs; 100% sustainable fish; and a proportion of higher welfare pork and chicken were served at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Ensure good food is accessible and well promoted to all

Healthy, sustainable diets are accessible and affordable to all, through a diverse array of outlets, and it becomes unacceptable and expensive to promote unhealthy, unethical and unsustainable produce.



“Sustain’s work is invaluable - effective campaigning and practical action backed up by robust evidence.”

Dan Crossley, Food Ethics Council

With 80% of the grocery market controlled by just four supermarkets, our choices are dominated by what they sell and promote. Supermarkets 'choice edit' sometimes in a positive way, such as only stocking Fairtrade bananas; more often in a way that promotes over-consumption of foods where the most profit can be made, which often happen to be the least healthy and the least sustainable.

Throughout our food system special offers and marketing strategies encourage people to buy food they don't need, with little attention to promoting ethics or health.

And yet, many of our fellow citizens are still hungry. The rise of food poverty is shameful in a rich country like ours in the 21st Century. Many currently can't afford a healthy sustainable diet, which is as much to do with inadequate incomes as it is to do with a policy framework and subsidies that don't favour good food.

However, food poverty isn't just about going hungry, it is about people not being able to eat a healthy diet, whether due to the expense or their inability to access nutritious food. This could be helped by better planning policy

to promote local convenience shops and markets and public transport; restrictions on out-of-town supermarkets that otherwise drain the profitability out of town centres; healthier and fairer food marketing policies by supermarkets and their suppliers.

There is hope though, with more and more people keen to take control of the food system: setting up alternative ways of providing access to healthy affordable food, or protecting their local area from a proliferation of outlets creating an unhealthy, unsustainable local environment.

Over the next five years

Sustain aims to make good food as affordable, convenient and as well promoted as unhealthy, unsustainable food. Some examples of our activities will include:

- Championing the growth of alternative retail and challenging the over-reliance on, and dominance of, a handful of supermarkets and their practices.
- Tackling food poverty, starting by calling for the introduction of a national measurement of food poverty in order to reduce it, and targeting efforts to alleviate food poverty in the long term that go well beyond the food bank, identifying where government has a responsibility to make life better for the most vulnerable, and holding them to account.
- Ensuring the rights of people not to be inundated by promotion of unhealthy unsustainable produce, or misled by labelling and marketing claims.
- Calling on government at every level to ensure good food is more affordable than unhealthy unsustainable food, through a fairer balance in taxes and subsidies within food and agriculture.

What Sustain has achieved

- Our campaign has led to some of the strongest laws in the world to protect children from junk food advertising on television.
- In the first half of 2014, the Children's Food Campaign succeeded in pressing Aldi, Lidl and Tesco to remove sweets and chocolates from checkouts across their full range of stores.
- We established a Sugary Drinks Duty as a mainstream concept for the UK, through our report A Children's Future Fund (2013), and subsequent campaign, which is beginning to win political traction.
- Through our Children's Food Campaign, we were part of the coalition that campaigned successfully for the introduction of universal infant free school meals.

Improve our food culture, education and skills

We have a strong UK food culture that ensures food is valued and enjoyed, and is promoted in coherent integrated government policy, and where skills in production and food quality are appreciated by all and not just the few.



For many in the UK, we have lived through a food revolution in recent years. Cooking has become a staple of prime time television, and chefs have become celebrities, some able to influence and improve international food policy. Our shops and markets offer a much larger range of produce than a few decades ago, reflecting a demand for ingredients to meet a much more developed sense of taste and interest in a range of cuisines. International visitors have recognised the improvement in our food, and the departure from a culture that took post war rationing a little too much to heart. We've moved on from our tendency towards austere food lacking in flavour

and enjoyment that pervaded the decades that followed. Now more British people want to understand where their food comes from, how it was produced and who produced it.

But this culture and these values are still not commonplace. For many, food that would once have been made from scratch, has been replaced with a ready meal or fast food. Still too many children do not know where their food comes from, part of a wider disconnect we have from our food production. Where once families ate together, many don't even have a dining table. In

most workplaces, the lunch break has been replaced by a sorry sandwich sat at the desk. Food as fuel.

Underlying our food culture and many of the barriers to change, is government policy. Where it has been joined up, such as recent successes in school food, we have seen a change in standards and in culture. But for many years this country has lacked a coherent food and farming policy, and only recently seen the benefits of those emerging, mainly at local or sectoral level.



“At the heart of a good food and farming system, we need to make sure that people enjoy their food. If you enjoy it, you value it, and you are more likely to care about how it has been produced and the impact it has.”

Anne Dolamore, Grub Street Publishing and Sustain chair, 2005 to 2012

Over the next five years

Sustain aims to see the further transformation and improvement of our food culture and joined up policy by:

- Getting good food recognised at a policy level in all four nations, every city, local authority, institution and workplace.
- Ensuring a vision of a good food culture is promoted and evident in more and more walks of life, and achievable and desired by all.
- Championing availability of food skills and education for all, from growing to cooking, but also the appreciation of traditional skills in the production of food, for example, Real Bread.
- Recruiting people, through our projects and campaigns, to champion a better food culture, both at a local level and high profile spokespeople, to help us to have a louder voice.

What Sustain has achieved

- Through Sustain's London Food Link network, we worked with partners to establish a Mayoral food board for London, and arguably the most progressive food strategy for a world class city. In partnership with members of our alliance, we have helped to establish a Sustainable Food Cities network across the UK.
- Through Capital Growth we helped support the creation of over 2,012 new community food growing spaces in London, and involving around 120,000 people. This spawned the Big Dig helping around 10,000 new volunteers get involved in community food growing across 29 UK cities since 2012.
- We established established a national network championing Real Bread, helping more than 10,000 children to learn to bake a loaf, and providing guidance to more than 5,000 people running microbakeries, Community Supported Bakeries and other small, local Real Bread enterprises.
- With Children's Food Campaign partners we initiated the successful campaign to get cooking on the national curriculum.

How we work

Sustain operates in collaboration with our membership and:

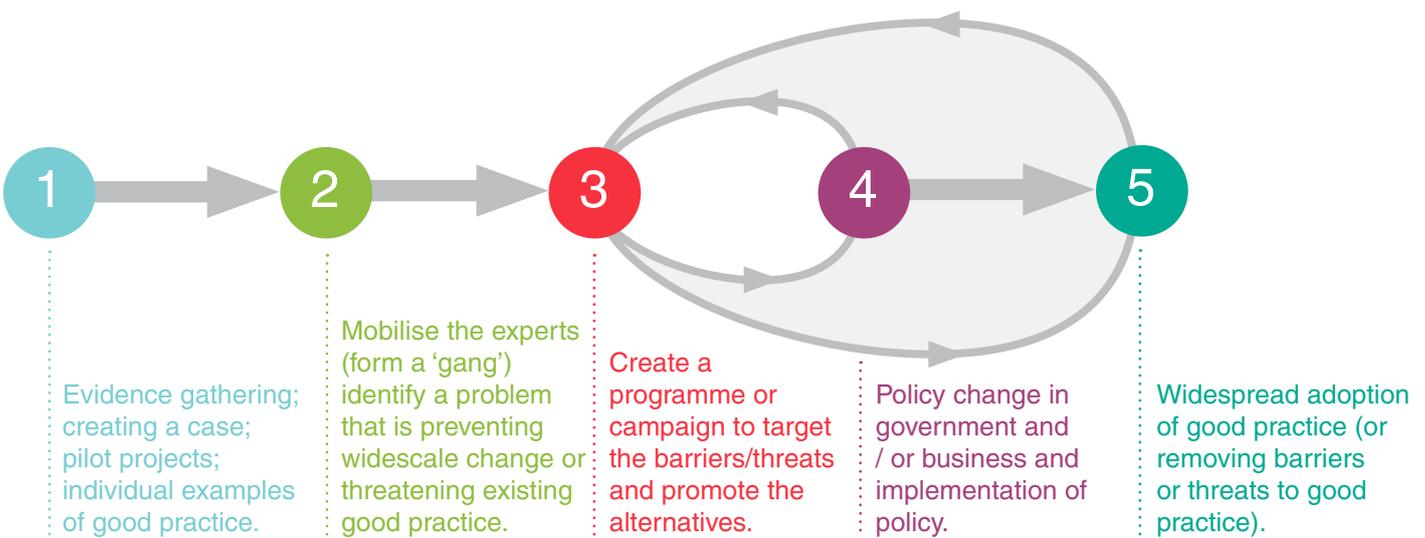
- Facilitate the exchange of information to strengthen the work of the membership, and help promote their activities to the media and to policy makers.
- Develop networks of members and allied organisations to devise and implement policies and practices on particular issues of common concern.
- Advise and negotiate with governments and other regulatory agencies to ensure that legislation and policies on food and agriculture are publicly accountable and socially and environmentally responsible.
- Encourage businesses to produce, process and market foods which are good for health and the environment, and to devise, invest in and maintain policies and practices that make sustainable food choices the easy choice.
- Run campaigns and networks, produce research and provide targeted advice, to meet the challenges ahead.

The teaspoon of transformation (our 'theory of change')

We are fortunate within our alliance to having members with influence at all different levels of the food and farming system. Some creating a really meaningful impact at a grassroots level, others act as a voice for a specific

concern, and more who through the strength of their supporters are able to reach a mass audience and create change at a citizen level. All of these make a difference. So what does Sustain add?

As well as being agile and responsive to immediate and unpredictable developments in the food system, the way in which we see our role in creating change on an issue, can be summarised in the following ways.



We believe that a meaningful difference can be made at many levels, and Sustain will pursue opportunities to fulfil its vision at a national and local level, across the four nations and even internationally if it helps to make farming and the food we eat in the UK more healthy and sustainable.

Who we work with

Sustain as an alliance

As an alliance, Sustain is as strong as its membership. Membership is open to national organisations that do not distribute profits to private shareholders and which operate in the public or their members' interest. The organisations must be wholly or partly interested in food or farming issues and support the general aims and work of the alliance.

Our members

Agricultural Christian Fellowship
Alexandra Rose Charities
Association of School Health
Education Co-ordinators
Association of Public Analysts
Baby Milk Action
Behaviour Change
Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Assoc
British Association for the Study
of Community Dentistry
British Dental Health Foundation
British Dietetic Association
British Heart Foundation Centre
on Population Approaches for
Non-Communicable Disease
Prevention
Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)
Campaign for Real Farming
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Caroline Walker Trust
Centre for Food Policy
Chartered Institute of
Environmental Health
Commonwork Land Trust
Community Composting Network
Community Food and Health
Scotland
Compassion in World Farming
Consensus Action on Salt &
Health (CASH)
Diabetes UK
f3:the local food consultants
Faculty of Public Health
Fairtrade Foundation
Family Farmers' Association
FareShare
Farma National Farmers Retail
& Markets Association
Farms not Factories
Federation of City Farms
& Community Gardens
Feedback
First Steps Nutrition Trust
Food Ethics Council
Food Matters
Forum for the Future
Freedom Food

Friends of the Earth
Gaia Foundation
Garden Organic (HDRA)
GM Freeze
Guild of Food Writers
H.U.S.H. (UK E.Coli support group)
Harper Adams University, Dept
of Food Science and Agri-Food
Supply Chain Management
Health Education Trust
Institute for Food Brain and
Behaviour
International Institute for Environment
and Development (IIED)
Keep Britain Tidy
Linking Environment and
Farming (LEAF)
Marine Conservation Society
Marine Stewardship Council
McCarrison Society for
Nutrition & Health
National Federation of
Women's Institutes
National Trust
Natural England
New Economics Foundation
Northern Ireland Chest, Heart &
Stroke
Organic Centre Wales
Organic Research Centre - Elm Farm
Organic Trade Board
Pasture-fed Livestock Association
Permaculture Association
Pesticides Action Network, UK
Practical Action (Intermediate
Technology)
Royal Academy of Culinary Arts
Chefs Adopt a School Trust
Royal Society for Public Health
Royal Society for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
Royal Society for the Protection
of Birds (RSPB)
School Food Matters
School of Artisan Food
Scottish Crofting Federation
Slow Food UK

Soil Association
The Kindling Trust
The Land Workers' Alliance
The Urban Orchard Project
Unison
UNITE - Agricultural Workers Group
Vegetarian Society
Which?
Wholesome Food Association
Women's Environmental Network
World Cancer Research Fund
World-wide Opportunities on
Organic Farms
WWF - UK

Our observers

Allergy Alliance
Child Poverty Action Group
GMB
Hyperactive Children's Support
Group
UK Food Group
UK Health Forum
Wildlife and Countryside Link
WWF - Scotland

Joining the Sustain alliance

If your organisation is interested in becoming a Sustain member, download an application form at: www.sustainweb.org/membership or call the Sustain office for a conversation about how your organisation can get involved. If your work is local rather than national, you may prefer to support a particular campaign or initiative, or join a project working party. Get in touch and we'll help you decide how best to join in.

Sustain's governance

Sustain represents around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level. It advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, promote equity and enrich society and culture.

Sustain is governed by its membership, which is open to national organisations that do not distribute profits to private shareholders and thus operate in the public interest. Members must be wholly or partly interested in food and/or farming issues and support the general aims and work of the alliance. Sustain's membership usually meets once a year in general session at the Annual General Meeting, and members also attend a range of specialist policy and project working party meetings, which are usually chaired by a Sustain Council member, as well as specialist events dealing with issues of common concern.

Sustain Council members, campaigners and other staff meet annually for a Strategy Day to review and refresh Sustain's approach to policy and project development.

The Council members are elected by the membership (and a minimum of one third of the Council must stand down each year) to form a governing body of up to 15 Trustees. All Trustees declare any relevant financial interests when they are elected, and at the beginning of each quarterly meeting, and these interests are publicly available. Sustain's Council of Trustees meets quarterly to guide the work of the alliance, subject to approval by the members. As the Trustees are drawn from Sustain's membership, all of whom are third-sector organisations, they are familiar with the structure of and governance in this sector.

Quarterly Trustee meetings are also attended by Sustain's core management team, who act as Sustain's executive body, responsible for running projects, managing project and campaign staff, fundraising, maintaining good financial oversight, and for developing the work of the alliance, in close consultation with Sustain's members and other relevant bodies.

Download this report in pdf format at
www.sustainweb.org/publications

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Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming

sustain@sustainweb.org
www.sustainweb.org

Sustain, Development House
56-64 Leonard Street
London EC2A 4LT
Tel: 020 7065 0902